MARVEL COMICS

2099

JUNE '96 4

ENTER THE MAN CALLED EXODUS™

X-NATION 2099™

IS HE THEIR SAVIOR--

--OR THE HERALD OF ARMAGEDDON?!

DIRECT EDITION

$1.95 US $2.75 CAN

THE XAVIER SHELTER FOR INDIGENT CHILDREN.

DAWN...

THE TIME OF DAY DEVOTED TO SILENT MEDITATION...

...REFLECTION...

...AND AS **SISTER NICHOLAS** HAS PRACTICED EVERY MORNING SINCE HER ARRIVAL AT THE SHELTER...

...SUPPLICATION.

WE ADJURE YOU, O' ***REDEEMER*** OF LOST SOULS--

--DELIVER US UNTO THE ***LAND FORETOLD*** UNSCATHED--

--FOR THE ***DAY OF RECKONING*** IS AT HAND... EH?

KNEEL BESIDE ME, CHILD--

--AND ***LEARN***...

I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, *SISTER NICHOLAS--*

--BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN *THIS* WING OF THE SHELTER BEFORE...

*A NEOPHYTE OF THE **SISTERHOOD OF THE HOWLING COMMANDMENTS**...*

*...**SISTER DEBBI** IS NOT YET PRIVY TO THAT AUSPICIOUS ORDER'S SACROSANCT MYSTERIES.*

*THAT IS ABOUT TO **CHANGE.***

IT'S *BEAUTIFUL--*

--BUT, WHAT DOES IT *MEAN?*

"THUS... THE THREE, DIVIDED, *BECOME* ONE, UNITED..."

THAT'S FOR *YOU* TO DECIDE, ***DEBRA.***

THE ***PROPHECY*** HOLDS A DIFFERENT SIGNIFICANCE FOR ALL WHO RECEIVE IT.

TAKE OUR GUEST-- ***CEREBRA.***

SHE INTERPRETS THIS WISDOM ***ONE WAY***--

--AS *I* DO ***ANOTHER.***

AND WHILE WE ARE ***TWO SIDES*** OF THE SAME COIN--

--*I* BELIEVE SHE CHOOSES TO *IGNORE* THE ***TRUTH***--

SHAKAZOW!

BY THE ***RUBY QUARTZ*** OF--!!

WAS THAT A ***LASER RIFLE--?!***

SHAZZAAAK!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

WE ARE *UNDER ATTACK*, DEBRA.

DO NOT LOSE YOURSELF TO *FEAR*.

KA-BOOM

*BUT AS THE ERUDITE **SISTER EINSTEIN** HURTLES THROUGH THE CATHEDRAL DOORS...*

...COMING TO A QUIESCENT HALT AT THEIR FEET...

...A HUSK OF HER FORMER SELF...

*...**FEAR** IS THE ONE EMOTION THIS YOUNG NOVITIATE CAN SCARCELY **SUPPRESS**.*

DEAD.

Noooo... IT **CAN'T** BE... EINSTEIN!

FOCUS, GIRL.

REMEMBER YOUR ***MEDITATIONS:***

"WE ARE THE *SISTERS OF THE HOWLING COMMANDMENTS--*

"--WE ARE THE ***BEST*** THERE IS AT WHAT WE DO..."

"HELP CEREBRA LEAD THE CHILDREN TO THE LAND FORETOLD.

"THE FUTURE OF ALL HUMANITY DEPENDS ON IT...

"...ON PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF...

"...ON THE CHILDREN OF THE ATOM..."

"CARRY THE TORCH-- THE HOPE-- FOR ALL OF US.

OVER TIME, DEBBI MIGHT HAVE BECOME THE SISTERHOOD'S MOTHER SUPERIOR...

...A GUIDING LIGHT FOR ALL TO FOLLOW INTO A BRIGHTER AGE.

AND THOUGH A SILENT FIGURE ARRIVES TOO LATE TO SAVE HER...

KRAKOW!

INSTEAD, THE FIRE WITHIN HER IS BRUTALLY EXTINGUISHED...

...AN UNFORTUNATE CASUALTY IN A SENSELESS WAR.

...DEBBI MAY YET BE AVENGED...

MEANWHILE, AT THE MILLION PALMS FAMILY FUN CENTER...

...X-NATION HAS PROBLEMS OF ITS OWN TO CONTEND WITH.

I ALREADY TOLD YOU, MAN--

--I DON'T KNOW ANY GIRL NAMED WILLOW!

GOTTA STALL 'EM UNTIL I CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO HELP NOSTROMO...

NOSTROMO.

CLARION.

SAVE THE SONG AND DANCE FOR AVIAN, PUNK...

DECEMBER.

TWILIGHT.

WULFF.

UPROAR.

RASSUM FRASSUM POWER INHIBITOR...

LOAD UP THE MUTIE, BOYS...

ARRGHH!!! THE PAIN... TEARING ME UP INSIDE!

DO SOMETHING! HIS MUTATION IS KILLING HIM!

YEAH YEAH YEAH. WE'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE, KID.

MORON.

STAY COOL, NOS!

WE'LL GET OUT OF HERE SOMEHOW!

I MAY TALK A MEAN GAME--

--BUT THE QUESTION STILL REMAINS--

--HOW THE SHOCK ARE WE GONNA DO IT?!

MINUTES LATER...

...IN THE LABORATORY OF THE INFAMOUS FALCONER...

I'M ONLY GOING TO ASK YOU THIS ONCE, LITTLE GIRL--

--WHERE IS WILLOW?!!

LET HER GO, CREEP!

FLAP THAT TONGUE OF YOURS AGAIN, PUP-- AND YOU'RE NEXT!

I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE WILLOW IS, AVIAN--

--AND EVEN IF I DID--

PTOOEEY!

--I WOULDN'T SHOCKIN' TELL YOU!

FOOLISH CHILD--

--YOU HAVE JUST SEALED YOUR FRIENDS' FATE, AS WELL AS YOUR OWN!

GUARDS! TAKE THEM TO PROCESSING!

NO! NOT PROCESSING-- UHNN!!

PROCESSING.

THE CENTER OF HEROD'S GENETIC "INQUISITIONS".

AS THOSE UNFORTUNATE MUTANTS SUSPECTED OF BEING THE PROPHESIED "MUTANT MESSIAH" ARE DRAGGED...

...KICKING AND SCREAMING...

...INTO THIS WORLD OF CEASELESS AGONY AND INESCAPABLE MISERY...

...A SINGULAR THOUGHT FLASHES THROUGH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEIR MINDS:

"ABANDON ALL HOPE YE WHO ENTER HERE."

BUT FOR THE YOUNG MUTANT, METALSMITH...

...RECENTLY-ARRIVED TO THIS CHAMBER OF HORRORS...

...THAT IS ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE.

WHO... IS... THAT?!? HE'S--

--BEAUTIFUL!!!

WHO... IS... THAT GIRL?!?

HEY!! LET ME GO, YOU DWEEBS!!!

YEAH!!! LET HER GO, YOU DWEEBS!!!

THE ONLY PLACE YOU'RE GOING, MUTIE--

--IS INTO YOUR CAGE, WHERE YOU BELONG!

SHOCK-- SHE'S AMAZING.

SHOCK-- HE'S *AMAZING.*

I HAVE GOT TO GET *OUT OF HERE...*

*LITTLE DOES TWILIGHT REALIZE THAT THE ODDS OF ANY **ESCAPE** HAVE JUST GONE FROM SLIM...*

WELL, DOCTOR--?

...TO NONE.

HAVE ANY OF THEM DISCLOSED THE WHEREABOUTS OF THEIR ABSENT FRIEND YET?

NO SIR, LORD FALCONER.

PERHAPS THEY WOULD BE *MORE RESPONSIVE* TO OUR INQUIRIES IF THEY UNDERSTOOD THE... ***INTENSITY***... OF MY *CURIOSITY...*

YES SIR, LORD FALCONER.

TEK

IT IS A PAIN UNLIKE ANY THESE KIDS HAVE EVER FELT BEFORE...

...COURSING-- SEETHING-- THROUGH THEIR BODIES...

...WITH NO FORESEEABLE SIGN OF CESSATION...

*...SAVE, PERHAPS, **DEATH.***

IF THEY'RE LUCKY!

INTRIGUING...

NO ONE HAS EVER RESISTED AN *INTERROGATION* LIKE *THIS* BEFORE.

THESE CHILDREN'S THRESHOLDS FOR PAIN-- ESPECIALLY THE GIRL, *TWILIGHT'S*--

--FAR *EXCEED* THOSE OF MUTANTS TWICE *THEIR* AGE.

COULD THIS BE A *TREND* INDIGENOUS TO *HOMO SUPERIOR'S* NEXT GENERATION? OR--

--AS I AM *LOATH* TO ADMIT--

FWIP!

--AND USING IT TO MY BEST ADVANTAGE!

OH, YEAH? AS IF...

--NOT *NOW*--

--WAS *HEROD* CORRECT IN ASSUMING THAT MUTANTKIND'S SO-CALLED "*SAVIOR*" IS COUNTED AMONGST THIS JUVENILE RABBLE?

I LOOK FORWARD TO UNVEILING THAT PARTICULAR MYSTERY--

I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU TURN X-NATION INTO YOUR *MINDLESS SLAVES,* FALCONER--

--NOT *EVER!*

HALO CITY...

...WHERE THE TELEPATHIC X-MAN KNOWN AS **CEREBRA**...

...FACES A SPECTER FROM MUTANTKIND'S **PAST**...

...AND PERHAPS A HARBINGER OF ITS **FUTURE**.

WHO ARE YOU-- WHAT DO YOU **WANT?**

I WANT **YOU**, FAIR CEREBRA--

--YOUR **STRENGTH**, YOUR **COURAGE** AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY--

--I WANT **X-NATION!**

--LOSING MY BALANCE... *FALLING!*

THAT'S **TOO BAD**-- BECAUSE YOU CAN'T HAVE THEM!

A FORMIDABLE PSYCHIC ASSAULT, GIRL--

UNGGH!!! **PSIONIC BACKLASH** SO INTENSE--

--ALBEIT A **FUTILE** ONE.

I CAN *LIBERATE* THEM FROM THIS **GHETTO** MUTANT-KIND CALLS *HOME*, CHILD.

IF YOU BUT *JOIN* ME--

--THOSE CHILDREN WILL NEVER *FEAR* **HUMANITY** AGAIN!

FAZASH!!

JOIN A MURDERER LIKE YOU--?

OVER MY DEAD SHOCKING BODY!!!

THOSE THOUGHTS I'M SENSING INSIDE EXODUS'S MIND--

--SO *MALICIOUS*, SO *CRUEL*--

--I'VE GOT TO FIND THE KIDS *BEFORE* HE DOES...

TEMPORARY *NEURAL* PARALYSIS...!

SHE'S *GONE*?! HMNN...

MISS HADDAD WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT *ACOLYTE* IN MUTANTKIND'S *EMANCIPATION*.

IF *NOT*, THEN *SHE*--

--ALONG WITH THE *REST* OF X-NATION--

--WILL *DIE*!

BACK AT THE SHELTER...

...A BAD SITUATION HAS GOTTEN SIGNIFICANTLY WORSE!

FRONT FLANK'S BLOCKED. REAR FLANK'S BLOCKED--

--WE'RE PINNED!

GEE. THANKS FOR THE UPDATE, SAMTSON...

THE QUESTION IS, WHY?

MAYBE THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH SISTER WHISPER!

WHERE THE SHOCK IS THAT HALF-BREED, ANYWAY?

IF WHISPER'S NOT OUT THERE FIGHTING-- THEN SHE'S DEAD.

AND I'LL [redacted] SHOCKED IF I'M GONNA LET THESE FISH-FACED MONSTERS TAKE ME DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT!

C'MON, GIRLS-- NOBODY LIVES FOREVER...

HA-HOOOO!!!

WITH AN EXPERTISE HONED BY YEARS OF INTENSE DISCIPLINE AND TRAINING...

...THEY STRIKE AS ONE, FEROCIOUSLY CLEAVING THE ATLANTEAN RANKS IN TWO.

THEIR ASSAULT IS BRUTALLY SWIFT...

YOU CALL YOURSELVES *WARRIORS*?!

YER NOTHIN' BUT A BUNCH O' *PANTYWAIST FLOUNDERS!*

WERE THESE *SUB-MARINERS* TRULY ***WARRIORS,*** SAMSON, THEN THEY WOULD KNOW IT IS BEST--

KERAK!

--TO "NEVER TURN YOUR BACK ON AN OPPONENT, *BUB*".

I DOUBT THEY'RE FAMILIAR WITH *LOGAN'S COMMANDMENTS OF COMBAT*, ROSE!

GOOD THING, TOO-- THEY'VE GOT US HOPELESSLY ***OUTNUMBERED*** AS IT IS...

SHUNK

YET, DESPITE THE ATLANTEANS' SUPERIOR NUMBERS...

...THEY ARE NOT THE ONES WHO EMERGE TRIUMPHANT.

THIS BATTLE--?
YES.
BUT THE WAR IS FAR FROM OVER.

AWRIIIGHT!! WE WON!

PROPHETIC WORDS, SISTER--

--FOR YOUR "VICTORY" IS A PYRRHIC ONE AT BEST--

--AND FIRST BLOOD BELONGS TO ATLANTIS!!

YEARGH!

DEAR LORD-- NOT AGAIN!!

SHE AIN'T MOVING, NICK! I CAN'T FEEL A PULSE!

ROSIE!?

SHE-- SHE'S GONE, SAM...

AS YOU CAN SEE, SHE IS *NOT* THE ***ONLY ONE*** DEPARTED FROM THIS MORTAL COIL.

I *PERSONALLY* DISPATCHED THIS LITTLE ONE ON A SIMILAR JOURNEY. BUT FEAR NOT--

--FOR THE REST OF YOU FEMALES SHALL ***JOIN*** THEM PRESENTLY...

...SO VOWS ***ATTUMA,*** *WARLORD OF ATLANTIS!*

BECAUSE IT WAS *FORETOLD*-- "WHEN THE WATERS RISE, THE PROTECTORS OF THE *FALSE* PROPHET MUST ***DIE.***"

THERE IS ONE AMONG YOU WHO IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST SOME *DESTITUTE YOUTH.*

SHE IS A ***THREAT*** TO OUR UNDERSEA SOVEREIGNTY-- AND SHE MUST BE PUT TO ***DEATH!***

HE KILLED LITTLE DEBBI... HE KILLED LITTLE DEBBI...

BARBARIAN! SHE WAS JUST A CHILD!

HOW COULD YOU *SLAUGHTER* AN INNOCENT GIRL SO ***CALLOUSLY?!***

MURDERER!! YOU KILLED LITTLE DEBBI!

SISTER SAMSON ATTACKS WITH A SPEED UNCOMMON TO A WOMAN OF SUCH MASSIVE STATURE.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR HER...

...SHE IS NOT FAST ENOUGH...

A MILE OR SO BELOW MILLION PALMS...

...X-NATION PLOTS ITS NEXT MOVE...

...SO I'LL ZIG LEFT, ZAG RIGHT--

--AND BUST UP ANY OF THE GOONS THAT TRY TO STOP US!

RIIIGHT-- LIKE YOU'LL EVEN MAKE IT TO THE SURFACE.

THEY'LL CATCH YOU BEFORE YOU EVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY!

OH, YEAH? THEN, LET'S SEE YOU COME UP WITH A BETTER PLAN, COOL GUY!

FINE.

CLARION-- I'LL NEED YOU TO GENERATE A CONCENTRATED HIGH-FREQUENCY SONIC PULSE...

TWILIGHT-- YOU HAVE TO EXTEND YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AS FAR AS YOU--

UH, HEL-LOOOO--?!

AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING, DORKSMITH?!

THANKS TO THESE INHIBITOR HALOS-- OUR POWERS DON'T WORK!

YOU SHOULDN'T BE OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE COLLARS, CHILDREN.

BY SUNRISE TOMORROW--

--YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THEM ANYMORE!

HEY, MISTER-- MAYBE YOU OUGHTTA *TURN AROUND* FOR A SEC...

OH? WHY *SHOULD* I?

THAT'S WHY...

Dr. TOOMS?!

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*?!

AAK

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR-- *ARRRGGH!!*

ULP!

NO-- *LOOK!* DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE THAT *TATTOO*--

THAT'S NO "SCIENTIST"-- *THAT'S WILLOW!!*

WELL, FOLKS-- I CAN'T SAY IT'S BEEN *NICE* KNOWING YA...

HIYA, GANG! MISS ME?

WILLOW! YOU'RE NOT DEAD!

NOW, GATHER 'ROUND A[redacted] LISTEN UP-- 'CAUSE I'VE GOT PLAN *GUARANTEED* TO GET US *HOME!*

NO *WAY*-- NO *HOW*-- GIRLFRIEND!

WHEN IT COMES TO *SHAPE-CHANGING* AND *STAYING ALIVE*--

--I AM THE *ORIGINAL DIVA!*

BUT, WHAT ABOUT OUR POWERS?

DON'T SWEAT THE HALOS, BIG GUY--

"--THEY'RE OUR TICKETS OUT OF HERE!"

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

WELL, WE'VE MADE IT PAST *FIVE LEVELS OF SECURITY* WITHOUT A HITCH SO FAR...

...NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS GET *INSIDE* THAT *SHIP*...

...AND WE'RE HOME FREE!

A-HEM!

HUH?! WHAT?! OH-- YESSIR, MISTER *AVIAN, SIR!!*

THIS IS A PRISONER TRANSFER FROM PROCESSING CELL BLOCK 101370.

HEROD HIMSELF SUSPECTS ONE OF THESE CHILDREN TO BE THE ALLEGED "MUTANT MESSIAH".

YOU WILL CLEAR MY TRANSPORT TO DISEMBARK *IMMEDIATELY!*

ATAGIRL-- *EVIL THOUGHTS! THINK EVIL THOUGHTS!*

ABSOLUTELY, YOUR FEATHEREDNESS! AND MIGHT I SAY--

--THAT'S A *KICKIN'* TATTOO YOU'RE SPORTING TODAY, SIR!

OH, *SHOCK*-- WE'RE *BUSTED*...

Y'KNOW, I WAS THINKING ABOUT GETTING A TATTOO, MYSELF...

WE'RE REALLY GONNA GET *HOME!*

I DON'T BELIEVE IT-- BUT WILLOW'S *CHARADE* IS ACTUALLY *WORKING!*

[illegible], WHERE HAVE I SEEN [illegible] *MARKINGS* [illegible]...?

AND AS THE TRANSPORT SHIP ROCKETS OUT OF THE DOCKING BAY...

MR. ABBOTT-- MR. COSTELLO-- HAVE MY TRANSPORT PREPARED AND CLEARED FOR DISEMBARKATION...

HEROD'S GONNA BE PRETTY STOKED WHEN AVIAN DELIVERS THAT "MESSIAH" KID...

BEEP BEEP BEEP

EH? SOMEONE'S UPLINKING TO AVIAN'S *PRIVATE COMM LINE.* BUT THAT CAN ONLY BE DONE *HERE*...

BETTER SEE WHO IT IS--

LORD FALCONER?!

BUT YOUR TRANSPORT *JUST LEFT,* SIR. AND YOU WERE *ON* IT!

HEY, WAITAMINUTE! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR *TATTOO*--?

"TATTOO?!"

FOOL-- THAT WAS *WILLOW!*

YOU *HALFWITS* JUST LET X-NATION ESCAPE!!

LATER...

PRETTY FRESH HOW I STOOD UP TO AVIAN'S GOONS, DON'TCHA THINK, *TWI?*

UH... TWI? HEL-LO ?

ZZZ ZZZZZZ ZZZZZ

MR. AND MRS. METALSMITH --I LIKE HOW THAT SOUNDS...

MR. AND MRS. TWILIGHTSMITH... --I LIKE HOW THAT SOUNDS...

I'M *SERIOUS!* AVIAN DOES *EVERYTHING* WITH *RAZORWING* BY HIS SIDE!

EVERYTHING?

EVERYTHING.

STEERING CLEAR OF MILLION PALMS' AIRSPACE...

...X-NATION FINALLY HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO LET DOWN THEIR GUARD...

...TO TAKE IT EASY...

...TO RELAX...

...OR SO THEY THOUGHT.

UH, NOSTROMO...

YEAH?

DO ME A *BIIIG FAVOR--*

--TUUURRRNNN!!!

WHAAOOOM!

WHAT THE SHOCK WAS *THAT?!*

I DON'T KNOW.

--BUT THE *ENERGY WAKE* IT LEFT BEHIND SUGGESTS A VERY SPECIFIC POINT OF ORIGIN!

AND WHAT "POINT" IS THAT?

HOME...

BARELY MOMENTS AFTER THEIR SHIP TOUCHES DOWN IN THE XAVIER SHELTER'S YARD...

...X-NATION LEAPS INTO ACTION, READY TO SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF LIFE.

UNFORTUNATELY, BY THE TIME THEY CROSS THE GROUNDS...

...THERE WON'T BE ANY...

BOOM

NOOOO!!

TO BE CONTINUED...?

DIE, INFIDELS!!

THAT'LL BE THE DAY--

--YOU MISERABLE PLANKTON-PUSHERS!!

YEARRGH!

ZARK!

GIVE 'EM WHAT FOR, SAMMY!!

SISTER ROSE!!! SISTER SAMSON!!!

BUT, WHO ARE THEY FIGHTING--?!

ATLANTEANS!!

I WANT YOU OUT OF HERE NOW, DEBRA!

YOUR DESTINY LIES ON A DIFFERENT PATH THAN OURS...!

STAN LEE PRESENTS...

A TURNING POINT IN THE LIFE OF X-NATION AS ATLANTIS DRAWS:

FIRST BLOOD!

TERRY KAVANAGH & BEN RAAB: STORY
BEN RAAB: SCRIPT
ERIC BATTLE: PENCILS
JON HOLDREDGE: INKS
THIBERT & MENDOZA: INK ASSIST
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